

ADAM OF MACEDONIA



АДАМ

At the beginning there was the earth. Then it turned into clay, and it shaped into a figurine... The hands which created it, divined it, and gave it a name – Adam

The village of Govrlevo near Skopje, turned the attention of larger public with the archaeological revelation of the Neolithic settlement, and the prehistoric findings reminded us on its hidden treasures, and Govrlevo got the opportunity to eternalize its history in the course of our modern era. Archaeological, architectonic and other specific researches were initiated by the Macedonian archaeologist Miloš Bilbija from the City of Skopje Museum. These significant prehistoric revelations – the fascinating torso of a male figure, female figurines, portrait of a Neolithic man, etc. aroused the interest of his Slovenian colleague, archaeologist Mitja Guštin, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy - Department of Archaeology at the Ljubljana University. They jointly worked on this discoveries and on the shaping of the story about the village at the end of the city, and its distant history in the middle of the modern historic occurrences.

Govrlevo is located 15 km away from Skopje, behind the southern slopes of Mt.Vodno. The archaeological horizon of the Neolithic settlement at Cerje site was estimated at the border between the cultural layers that belong to the Neolith and Eneolith. The main artifact found, named 'Adam of Macedonia', represents a remarkable terracotta figurine of a male torso in a sitting position, which was unearthed by the archaeological excavation that followed this remarkable discovery. It is executed with supreme realistic dexterity unprecedented for the Neolithic. The sculpture is unique piece of art and it is one of the oldest and strangest artifacts found in the Republic of Macedonia. Immediately after it was found it earned the epithet of 'Millennium Discovery'. The sculpture made of clay is proven to be more than 7000 years old, the oldest one with such a specific features found in the Macedonian Peninsula region. It was created 'in situ' on the outskirts of today metropolis Skopje, who in its inner suburbia hides different Neolithic settlements as well. In those times the emerging forms of religious behavior were still expressed throughout rituals and animistic worship. It was the age at the beginning of the agricultural development, when the new urban structures have appeared instead of the nomadic hunter-gatherers camps with animal hides. House was the greatest important achievement of humanity in that time. However, the unexpected accentuation of the human anatomy by these prehistoric inhabitants of Macedonia will surprise even the most experienced archaeologists and historians. It is extraordinary testimony of the amazing achievement of human thought and abstract ideas throughout time, proposing completely new dimensions of our understanding of human existence in the so remote past.

Adam has an unusual artistic posture. It is a fully preserved and very successful attempt which represents a man caught in a moment of physical or spiritual activity. 'Adam of Macedonia', although incompletely preserved, presents surprising anatomical details and artistic expertise that were performed some 7500 years ago. This male body, placed in a seated position, has a specific anatomy, deeply indented abdomen, well-defined muscles, visible spine, ribs, navel, and even a phallus. However, what or who he represented remains a mystery. Was he just an artistic item of some talented Neolithic pottery maker, or a votive figurine of some primitive god we may never know.



According to German institute which made the analyzes with radioactive Carbon14 – the statuette "Adam" from the site near Govrlevo was created in 5478 BCE. Such dating again perfectly coincides with the findings of historians, linguists and geneticists, who set the chronological horizon and position of the first European agricultural settlements – in Macedonia proper. The archeological site *Cerje* near the village of Govrlevo shows that at that time, dating as far as the 8th millennium BCE, the surroundings of the settlement were situated in area particularly suitable for life, because of the climatic conditions and natural characteristics. Environment was such that created the right conditions for continued human activity and living in continuity for long periods, which has allowed these prehistoric Macedonians to produce wealth and create in a specific artistic way and notions. Neighboring nearby settlements confirm the rule, it was a thriving period that lasted hundreds or maybe thousands of years.

In the past years, 'Adam of Macedonia' has been promoted in a numerous international

symposia and conferences where invariably attracted great interest and attention of the scientific circles. *“The discovery of Adam belongs to the rich and not yet fully-discovered treasure of Macedonian anthropomorphic figurines from Neolithic. In that context, particular place have the many figurines of the Great Mother Goddess, which are the symbol of motherhood and house-fireplace, typical of Macedonian Neolithic. 'Adam', however, an exceptional male figurine, has its only appropriate parallel in contemporary sculpture of the Roden's 'Thinker',”* - says Professor Mitja Guštin, a longtime associate of Miloš Bilbija from the Institute for Mediterranean Heritage of Slovenia.



Above: **"Adam of Macedonia" 5478 BCE**

Nevertheless, modern scholars are forced to admit that the enigma of ‘Adam of Macedonia’ still remains without a convincing explanation for the true purpose of its existence. He was created in an epoch when the ideas of prehistoric peoples were so primitive that probably they would’ve be meaningless in terms of our perception and modern understandings. The available evidence for these distant times is very limited and any plausible reconstruction remains highly speculative. However, according to archaeologists, the statuette "Adam", because of its age and refinement of the workmanship, it was acclaimed as one of the ten most important archaeological discoveries in the world. Many international archaeological authorities agreed with the assessment that Macedonian Adam is special, describing it even as “the monument to mankind”, and French archaeologist Catherine Comange, an expert for the Neolith, said the figurine is exceptional when she visited Macedonia in 2008.

Another impressive discovery found at the locality is the sculpture of the Great Mother

Goddess, a Neolithic cult of fertility. This and other Neolithic anthropomorphic figurines, together with other artifacts from all around Macedonia, are exposed in the Museum of the City of Skopje and Archaeological Museum of Macedonia. "Adam of Macedonia" occupies a special place among the archaeological Neolithic exhibits within the museum exhibition catalog, in an appropriate showcase - as exceptional Neolithic finding from authentic Macedonian cultural heritage.



References:

<http://arheo.com.mk/2006/12/20/adam-from-macedonia/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070311140359/http://www.culture.in.mk/story.asp?id=9130>

[https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%90%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BC_\(%D0%BE%D0%B4_%D0%9C%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0\)](https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%90%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BC_(%D0%BE%D0%B4_%D0%9C%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0))

<http://www.macedonia.co.uk/client/index.aspx?type=2&news=1818>

<https://travelmacedonia.info/discover-macedonia/govrlevo-home-to-one-of-the-10-biggest-world-discoveries-a-neolithic-mans-torso>

<http://haemus.org.mk/adam-of-macedonia/>

<http://www.mgs.org.mk/~mgsorg/index.php/features/2014-06-25-09-39-35/all-templates-positions/module-suffixes/153-2016-04-04-09-03-54>